



Common Chickweed

Stellaria media L. Vill.

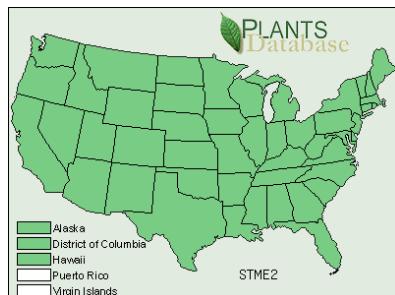
Common Names: chickweed, nodding chickweed

Native Origin: Europe

Description: A winter annual, mat-forming plant in the pink family (*Caryophyllaceae*) growing up to 12 inches tall. Stems are light green in color and with hairs in vertical rows. Stems usually run prostrate along the ground, rooting at the nodes, with the upper portion erect or ascending and freely branching. Small oval to elliptic leaves are arranged oppositely, 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches in length, light green in color and smooth or hairy toward base and petioles. Small star-shaped flowers consist of 5 white petals that are deeply lobed, giving the appearance of 10 petals and grow alone or in small clusters at the ends of the stems. The fruit is an oval, straw-colored capsule that contains many tiny reddish brown seeds. Seed output can be from 600 to 15,000 per plant. It reproduces vegetatively through a fibrous root system and by seeds.



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Habitat: Common chickweed found in a wide variety of habitats and soil textures. Soil pH ranges from 4.8 to 7.3. It prefers soil with high level of nitrogen supply. It can readily tolerate very low temperatures, and can even flower and fruit under a snow cover at temperatures as low as -16°F. It is sensitive to drought. It is found along disturbed lands, cultivated fields, waste places, trails, roadsides, forest, and gardens.

Distribution: This wide-spreading species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in HI, KY, MD, NC, NJ, PA, TN, VA, and WV.

Ecological Impacts: Common chickweed is able to create dense mats of shoots up to 12 inches long, shading young seedlings of other plants. It invades, spreads, and out-competes other spring annuals. Common chickweed is reported to contain poisonous glycosides and high nitrate levels.

Control and Management:



- **Manual-** Hand pull or dig; remove entire plant and root; dispose of all plant parts because plant shoots have the ability to re-root
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Follow label and state requirements. It is resistant to some herbicides - acetolactate synthase (ALS) inhibitors: chlorsulfuron, metsulfuron, tribenuron, triasulfuron, rimsulfuron, sulfometuron, flumetsulam and imazapyr.

References: www.forestimages.org, <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, http://ipm.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed_id/steme.htm, http://akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/pdfs/species_bios_pdfs/Species_bios_STME.pdf, www.weedscience.org/Case/Reference.asp?ReferenceID=597